

## FREDERICK AND PRUSSIA

### GERMANY IN THE 18TH CENTURY

The main development in Germany during the 18th century was the rise of Prussia. In the 17th century the Hohenzolleron family ruled both Brandenburg and East Prussia. In 1701 the ruler of both was Elector Frederick III. In that year he crowned himself King of Prussia. Soon the whole realm was called Prussia. However at first Prussia was an economically backward area. **It only rose to greatness under Frederick II 'The Great', who became king in 1740.**

Frederick had a very large army and he was a capable general, which allowed him to fight successful wars. In 1740 Prussia invaded Silesia (an Austrian possession). On 10 April 1741 the Prussians defeated the Austrians at the battle of Mollwitz. At first the battle went well for the Austrians. Their cavalry defeated the Prussian cavalry and Frederick fled from the battle. However the Prussian infantry stood and fought. They overcame both the Austrian cavalry and the Austrian infantry. As a result Prussia won the battle. Austria made peace in 1742 but the peace did not last long. War began again in 1745. The Prussians won a series of battles at Hohenfriedberg on 4 June, at Soor on 30 September and at Hennersdorf on 23 November. Frederick II ended the war in December 1745 with his territory enlarged.

In 1756 Prussia went to war again when Frederick invaded Saxony. However this time Frederick II was faced with a powerful coalition of enemies. Nevertheless the Prussians won two victories at Rossback in November 1757 and at Leuthen in December 1757. The Prussians also defeated the Russians at the battle of Zorndorf in 1758. However the tide of war then turned against the Prussians and they were defeated at the battle of Minden in 1759. Fortunately in January 1762, one of Frederick's most powerful enemies, Elizabeth of Russia, died and her son made peace with the Treaty of St Petersburg. The war ended in 1763. Then in 1772 Prussia, Austria and Russia agreed to carve up part of Poland between them. In 1792 Prussia and Austria went to war with Revolutionary France. However the French won victories and Prussia made peace in 1795. Meanwhile the Prussians and Russians divided up the remaining part of Poland in 1793.

Austria made peace with France in 1797 but war began again in 1799.

- 1) What area was combined to form *Prussia*?
- 2) ***What are the two reasons that Frederick the Great was able to win wars?***